

# Understanding the Reunification of Germany through the Use of Diaries

**Grade Level:** Grade 7  
**Content Area:** Social Studies  
**Time to Complete:** One eighty-four-minute block period  
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## 1. South Carolina Curriculum Standards Addressed (T = Targeted, I = Introduced, R = Reinforced/Reviewed)

- Social Studies

### I. Time, Continuity, and Change: History

- 7.1 The learner will demonstrate an understanding of the political and social developments of world regions.
  - 7.1.2 identify major social, cultural, and technological developments that emerged in world regions (R)
  - 7.1.6 analyze the causes and consequences of world conflicts (I, T)
  - 7.1.7 examine the implications of Communism and its effects on world history (I, T)

### III. People, Places, and Environment: Geography

- 7.3 The learner will demonstrate an understanding of world culture regions.
  - 7.3.15 describe how conflict and cooperation affect political, social, and economic systems in each world region (R)

## 2. Lesson/Unit Description

This lesson is designed to help middle school students understand the real-life implications of the events that took place in Germany in the late 1980s and early 1990s surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall, which had previously divided the German nation. After several lessons detailing the results of World War II, the foundation of a divided Germany, the building of the Berlin Wall, the years of strict border controls, the different political structures existing in East and West Germany, the rise of underground subversive protests against the East German government, the eventual fall of the Berlin Wall, and the ensuing reunification of Germany, the students will create a diary of entries based on fictional characters living during the years immediately prior to, during, and following the reunification process.

Each student will randomly select a character profile and create three fictional diary entries based on the circumstances surrounding the chosen character's life in 1987, three years prior

to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The students will also create three entries for the year of reunification, 1990, detailing any changes in the life of the chosen character. Finally, the students will create three diary entries for the year 1993, three years after the reunification process, again documenting any changes. It is the goal of the lesson to help students understand the conflicts experienced by the everyday citizen during the reunification process in Germany.

### **3. Focus Questions for Students**

- What was life like in East Germany before 1990?
- What was life like in West Germany before 1990?
- How did the reunification of Germany following the fall of the Berlin Wall affect the lives of different members of the German population?

### **4. Culminating Assessment**

Each student will create a diary based on a fictional character living in Germany during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Each student will be required to write a minimum of nine half-page diary entries that describe the life of his or her chosen character, including such details as employment, marital status, community activities, and political involvement. The diaries will be scored on the basis of the “Diary Evaluation Form,” included here.

### **5. Materials/ Equipment/Resources**

Included in this lesson:

- “Character Profiles”
- “Diary Evaluation Form”

Also needed to complete this lesson:

- map of Germany divided into West Germany and East Germany
- encyclopedia

### **6. Teacher Preparation**

- A. Prepare a brief review session of previously taught material on the following:
  - a. results of World War II,
  - b. the dividing of Germany,
  - c. the rise of the Berlin Wall, and
  - d. the process leading to reunification of Germany.
- B. Put the character profiles on individual note cards to be randomly selected by students.
- C. Establish procedures and requirements to ensure successful completion of the lesson.
- D. Prepare and make copies of “Diary Evaluation Form.”



## 7. Procedures

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Assessments
<p>Lead a class discussion in reviewing the previously taught material (see item 6A, above).</p> <p>Explain the concept and the purpose of the diary assignment.</p> <p>Read aloud each character profile (found on the “Character Profiles” sheet).</p> <p>Review any unclear information that may be pertinent to the students’ understanding of each character. For example, Eva Volker is a member of the Green Party. You may therefore want to review the basic tenets of the Green Party.</p> <p>Discuss requirements for the assignment and the means by which each student will be evaluated (i.e., the “Diary Evaluation Form”).</p>	<p>Listen and participate in the class discussion and review.</p>	<p>Higher-order questioning techniques</p> <p>Informal teacher observation</p> <p>Class discussion</p>
<p>Lead the class in a discussion that describes the attributes of a successful diary entry and an unsatisfactory entry.</p> <p>Have students randomly select a character profile.</p> <p>Allow students twenty minutes to write their first diary entry.</p>	<p>Listen and participate as ideas are shared.</p> <p>Write your first diary entry based on your character’s profile during the year 1987.</p>	<p>Informal teacher observation of class discussion</p> <p>Higher-order questioning techniques</p>

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Assessments
<p>Remind students that a minimum of three entries are needed for the year 1987, three for 1990, and three for 1993.</p> <p>Explain to students that they will complete their diaries at home and will submit them to the teacher in three days.</p>	<p>Write the remaining eight diary entries and submit them to your teacher.</p>	<p>Diary entries scored using the “Diary Evaluation Form”</p>

## 7. Differentiation of Instruction

This lesson can be adjusted to accommodate any variances in the ability levels of the students in the class. The length of each diary entry may be shortened, or the number of entries may be decreased for students with special needs (e.g., ESL students, students with disabilities). Students may use the assistance of a peer editor in the class. Gifted students may serve as peer editors. Students with special artistic abilities might create a comic-book version of their diary entries.

## **Character Profiles**

### **Eva Volker**

Mrs. Volker is a thirty-eight-year-old member of the West German Green Party, an environmental protest party seeking new members in East Germany. She is greatly concerned with the overall cost of reunification. The Green Party is now faced with the task of reversing the results years of environmental neglect, including industrial pollution. Mrs. Volker, a devout Catholic, is married and has one daughter.

### **Albroecht Hagedorn**

Mr. Hagedorn is a businessman from Nuremberg. He represents West German investors seeking to purchase land and factories in East Germany. Reunification represents unlimited business opportunities to Mr. Hagedorn. He is married, with three small children.

### **Annemarie Wipper**

Mrs. Wipper is a forty-four-year-old chemical engineer from Dresden who recently lost her job after the company hired an outgoing male manager from West Germany. Mrs. Wipper feels that the reunification process is proceeding too quickly. She also feels that women are seeing fewer benefits than men with the joining of the two Germanys. Mrs. Wipper is married and has no children.

### **Ingeborg Bach**

Ms. Bach is a fifty-five-year-old pastor from Leipzig. Under the protection of the church, Ms. she has been secretly aiding the peace and human rights movement. Although closely watched by the Stasi, Ms. Bach takes some credit for moving the country closer to reunification.

### **Franz Boerner**

Mr. Boerner is a thirty-one-year-old engineer for Telekom in Munich. Reunification has offered him the opportunity to advance in his career. Therefore, he does not share in the outspoken criticism of the reunification process. Mr. Boerner believes that the influx of Western development and investment can only raise his status and enhance the lives of many East Germans. He is divorced, with two grown children.

### **Johann Becker**

Mr. Becker is recent graduate of the University of Heidelberg. A journalism major, he is now employed by the Stuttgarter Zeitung. Mr. Becker was raised in a small town in East Germany and now enjoys the freedoms that were previously unavailable to him. Although he is neutral in the newspaper articles he writes, he adamantly supports the reunification process.

### **Stefanie Ganser**

Ms. Ganser is a thirty-year-old single mother of two children. She was working as a secretary in a West German real estate office for several years, but recently she was fired and replaced by an East German woman who was willing to work for less pay. Ms. Ganser feels a great amount of resentment concerning reunification because of the effect it has had on her employment situation.

**Thomas Graf**

Mr. Graf is a forty-nine-year-old former border guard from Berlin. He has worked hard throughout his career and been faithful to the system. He was awarded a medal for his exceptional service. Although he does not consider himself a socialist, Mr. Graf is convinced that not everything in East Germany was bad.

**Teodor Grieg**

Mr. Grieg is a thirty-three-year-old member of the Christian Democrat Party. As a result of multiple successful foreign investments, Mr. Grieg's family possesses several industrial factories near Hannover and is very wealthy. The Grieg name is known throughout East Germany as well. Teodor Grieg's uncle was killed trying to cross the border into West Germany and is hailed as a hero.

**Celeste Krickmeier**

Ms. Krickmeier is an eighteen-year-old student. She is an average teenager growing up in East Germany. As is customary for students her age, Ms. Krickmeier's life revolves around school, her friends, and her after-school job. Reunification will not be an issue for Ms. Krickmeier until her parents decide to leave their home and move to West Germany following the fall of the Berlin Wall.

## Diary Evaluation Form

Student name:	Maximum Possible Points	Points Awarded
Nine entries (minimum), one-half page each	10	
Coherence (logical; entries make sense, are sequenced well)	10	
Grammar (correct use of punctuation and other language mechanics, correct spelling, etc.)	10	
Creativity	10	
Neatness, legibility	10	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>50</b>	